

**United States Department of the Interior**  
**Bureau of Land Management**  
**Boise District**  
**Bruneau Field Office**  
**3948 Development Ave**  
**Boise, ID 83705**

**Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)**  
**Bruneau Field Office Livestock Trailing**  
**Environmental Assessment No. DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA**

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I have reviewed the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations for significance (40 CFR 1508.27) and have determined the actions analyzed in Environmental Assessment (EA) No. DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA will not have any significant impact, individually or cumulatively, on the quality of the human environment. Because the actions analyzed in the EA will not have any significant impact, an environmental impact statement is not required.

My finding was made after considering both the context and intensity of the effects, as described in the above EA, which this document incorporates by reference. I considered the following factors in determining significance:

1. The activities described in the proposed action (Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA) do not include any significant beneficial or adverse impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(1)), as described below:

- a. There are not any significant beneficial impacts of Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA to the applicants for crossing permits. For example, livestock trailing would cost approximately \$13,000 as shown on page 103 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA, approximately the same as Alternative A.
- b. There are not any significant beneficial impacts of Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA to species listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), candidate species for listing under ESA, and BLM special status species.
- c. There are not any significant adverse impacts of Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA on a species listed as threatened under the ESA.
  - 1) Bull trout “would not be affected because none of the routes cross the [Bruneau] river, and there are no pathways of effect from trailing that could reach the critical habitat. Bull trout critical habitat down in the Bruneau Canyon would not be affected by Alternatives A or C because the trails downstream of the Jarbidge River confluence (where the critical habitat begins on the Bruneau River) are located to the

west in a flat and rolling desert upland environment away from the rim of the canyon.” - page 59 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.

- d. There are not any significant adverse impacts of Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA on candidate species for listing under the ESA. For example:
  - 1) Effects on greater sage-grouse would be “minimal” and “would only potentially incur a slight decrease in the fitness of sage-grouse across the project area.” – page 82 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. “Cumulative impacts from Alternative C would be less than those described for Alternative A. Although both alternatives would have only minimal direct and indirect effects and there would be no measurable impacts to sage-grouse populations, Alternative C would have even fewer consequences to sage-grouse due to the imposed timing and location restrictions.” – page 84 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.
  - 2) For Columbia spotted frogs, “[a]nywhere from zero to a few individuals could be trampled at the localized areas of Battle Creek and Mary’s Creek, but there would be no measurable alteration to the population in the project area.” – page 85 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. Trailing would have similar impacts to spotted frog habitat as under Alternative A, where trailing “would not alter enough vegetation at the stream crossings to incur negative habitat impacts.” – page 84 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. For cumulative impacts, “[s]ince direct and indirect impacts would be so small as to be immeasurable and other projects that could occur in the project area would have no predictable negative consequences to spotted frogs, there would be no cumulative impacts to spotted frogs from this alternative beyond the aforementioned direct and indirect impacts.” – page 86 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.
- e. There are not any significant adverse effects of Alternative C of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA on BLM special status species. For example:
  - 1) For pygmy rabbits, “[a]t most, only a few individuals could experience mortalities from collapsed burrows, with no measureable impacts to the pygmy rabbit population residing within the project area.” – page 86 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. For cumulative impacts, “...minimal direct and indirect effects to pygmy rabbits resulting from Alternative C would interact similarly with other ongoing and future projects in the area, and there would be no measurable impacts to pygmy rabbit populations in the project area.” – page 88 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.
  - 2) Effects to redband trout would be “slightly less...due to stream crossings” as compared to Alternative A, under which “consequences to redband populations overall would be negligible.” – page 65 and 64, respectively, of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. “Under Alternative C, two stream sections (Sheep and Big Jacks Creeks) would no longer be paralleled by routes, as they would be under Alternative A. Therefore, no impacts to redband trout habitat would occur in these areas.” – page 65 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. For cumulative impacts, “Alternative C

would have a lower chance of incurring cumulative effects on redband trout due to having one less stream ford than Alternative A, and because there are no routes adjacent to streams with redband in this Alternative.” – page 70 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.

- 3) Effects to special status plant species would be “mostly negligible” when “roadside trailing impacts to special status plants are put into the context of overall plant population viability throughout the project area,” and “no populations of special status plants would be impacted by overnight areas under Alternative C.” – page 49 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. Cumulative impacts to special status plants in Alternative C would be similar to, but “substantially less” than, Alternative A, where “cumulative impacts would be relatively minor when viewed in the overall context of population viability.” – page 51 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.

2. The activities included in the proposed action would not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).

West Nile virus was discussed in the EA, which states, “In Alternative C, possible enhancement of mosquito habitat includes 11 crossings of perennial and intermittent streams and 9.5 miles of streams that are trailed along (Map 33). As mentioned previously, trailing has occurred historically in these areas, grazing will continue to occur in these areas, and these riparian habitats represent a miniscule fraction of what exists in the project area (~440 miles), so possible increases to mosquito habitat from this alternative would not be measurable.” – page 82 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.

A majority of the livestock trailing would occur along and adjacent to roads. The public may occasionally encounter livestock on roads during trailing activities; however, these encounters would not significantly affect public health and safety because the number of encounters along roads is expected to be low and the duration of the encounters would be limited in time. These effects are described in Section 3.15.2 of the EA, *Environmental Consequences – Recreation*. Furthermore, livestock trailing has occurred throughout this area for several decades and is not a new or unusual event that the public would encounter.

3. The proposed activities would not significantly affect any unique characteristics (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3)) of the geographic area such as prime and unique farmlands, caves, wild and scenic rivers, designated wilderness areas, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern.

No prime and unique farmlands, caves, wilderness study areas, or areas of critical concern are found within the trailing corridors. Three wilderness areas and one Wild and Scenic River are found within the trailing corridors under the proposed action: the Little Jacks Creek (418 acres), Big Jacks Creek (653 acres), and Owyhee River (220 acres) Wildernesses and the Battle Creek Wild and Scenic River (600 feet). – Table 30 on page 116 and 117 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. As disclosed in the EA, livestock trailing would have

negligible to no impacts to these wilderness areas and Wild and Scenic River (Section 3.17.2, *Environmental Consequences – Wilderness and Wild & Scenic Rivers*).

4. The activities described in the proposed action do not involve effects on the human environment that are likely to be highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).

Livestock trailing is a routine activity, and the effects of livestock trailing are well understood as described throughout Section 3.0 of the EA, *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences*.

Public input was requested from affected permittees and interested publics. Comments in response to these scoping efforts did not reveal any controversy related to the size, nature, or effects of livestock trailing activities.

5. Livestock trailing does not involve any effects that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).

Livestock trailing has occurred throughout this area for several decades, and the effects are well understood. The EA (Section 3.0, *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences*) discloses the expected environmental effects on the human environment; no unique or unknown risks have been identified.

6. My decision to authorize livestock trailing does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).

No significant cumulative impacts were identified within the EA No. DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. Implementation of this decision would not trigger other actions, nor will it represent a decision in principle about future considerations.

7. The effects of livestock trailing would not be significant, individually or cumulatively, when considered with the effects of other actions (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).

The EA discloses that no other connected or cumulative actions would cause significant cumulative impacts (throughout Section 3.0, *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences*). The proposed action was designed to lessen potential environmental effects relative to the routes originally applied for. The proposed action also contains general and route-specific stipulations that will be used to lessen potential environmental effects (Section 2.3.3, *Alternative C – Trailing Designed to Reduce Resource Conflicts*, pages 13-19, including Table 3 and Maps 2C through 28C). The cumulative effects analysis in the EA does not reveal any known significant cumulative effects. Any adverse impacts identified as a result of livestock trailing, when added to any adverse impacts of other past, present, or

reasonably foreseeable future actions, would result in negligible to minor impacts to natural and cultural resources.

8. I have determined that the activities described in the proposed action will not adversely affect or cause loss or destruction of scientific, cultural, or historical resources, including those listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)).

Based on the proposed trailing activities, an Area of Potential Effects (APE) was identified. Past inventory efforts within the APE were reviewed to identify sites that may be affected by the trailing activities. The EA (Section 3.12.2, *Environmental Consequences – Cultural Resources*) discloses that trailing activities are not expected to adversely affect six NRHP-eligible sites within the APE; however, “one potentially NRHP-eligible site, 10OE-6706, is potentially being adversely affected.” – page 96 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. For this site, a mitigation plan will be implemented, as described in Section 3.19.2, *Mitigation of Potentially Adverse Impacts to Cultural Site 10OE-6706*, to “assess whether or not impacts are occurring to the characteristics that would make site 10OE-6706 eligible for listing on the NRHP.... If impacts are documented to have occurred, further measures would be taken to mitigate impacts.” – page 121 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.

In addition, as described in Section 3.19.1, *Mitigation of Potential Impacts to Cultural Resources*, “the BLM will conduct Class III inventories at all stream crossings, spring areas, and overnight areas to further consider effects to cultural resources resulting from the issuance of the crossing permit. If NRHP-eligible sites are found and are determined to be impacted by livestock trailing, additional mitigation measures would be identified and implemented.” – page 121 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA. Consultation with the State Historic Preservation Office was initiated on March 1, 2012, and will be completed in association with individual crossing permits.

9. The proposed activities are not likely to adversely affect any endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)).

As disclosed in the EA (page 59), trailing will not adversely affect any threatened or endangered species because there are no known populations or designated critical habitat for any threatened or endangered species within areas where trailing will occur. Bull trout “would not be affected because none of the routes cross the [Bruneau] river, and there are no pathways of effect from trailing that could reach the critical habitat. Bull trout critical habitat down in the Bruneau Canyon would not be affected by Alternatives A or C because the trails downstream of the Jarbidge River confluence (where the critical habitat begins on the Bruneau River) are located to the west in a flat and rolling desert upland environment away from the rim of the canyon.” – page 59 of DOI-BLM-ID-B020-2012-0003-EA.

10. The proposed trailing activities will not threaten any violation of Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).

Chapter 1 of the EA (Section 1.6, *Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, and Other Requirements*) describes how trailing activities conform to relevant laws, regulations, policies, and any relevant local permitting requirements.

/s/ Arnold L. Pike  
Arnold L. Pike  
Field Manager  
Bruneau Field Office

3/26/2012  
Date